



GAZETTE

Summer Edition

July 2019

PRESIDENT'S INDUCTION MESSAGE: Diana Bondad

Good Evening Honored Guests, friends and family, today marks our 32nd Anniversary and 24th Induction Ball. I am pleased to be able to welcome those of you who have been with us for a long time and as well as those who are new. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of you who generously helped us make this event come together and become a success.

For more than three decades, PCSNJ, Inc. has been dedicated to serving the Filipino community both here and in the Philippines. Throughout the years we have organized different successful activities and fund raising events. My goal is to focus on physical activities that will help serve and build a stronger and

healthier community. I am sure that all committees will continue to work together to provide better services for the community. It is incumbent upon all of us to unite and steer this organization towards the path of peace and solidarity. I am the link in a long chain of dedicated professionals who have served as President of PCSNJ, Inc. a chain that reaches back to 1986. I pledge to continue the important and valuable work of those that came before me. I will personally be of service to as many members as I am able.

Thank you in advance for your participation in various charitable, cultural and fund raising events. It is because of your trust and involve-



ment that our organization is able to thrive and to provide as many benefits not only to the members but also to the entire Filipino community. As we continue grow, we will keep our focus on "DOING THE RIGHT THING FOR PCSNJ, Inc.". Together we will continue to make PCSNJ, Inc. an organization we can be proud to belong to.

Thank you again for the faith you have placed on me and for the privilege to

serve as your 25th President. I welcome your thoughts, your suggestions and opinions. I will do my best for the future of the organization.

Enjoy the evening!

Yours Truly,
Diana Bondad
PCSNJ, Inc. President



PCSNJ AND CONSULATE: A PARTNERSHIP By Diana Bondad

The Consulate General of the Philippines has been working in cooperation with PCSNJ, inc. in conducting its regular outreach missions. Once a year, the Consul General holds office at the Philippine Community Center. Many Filipinos from Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia usually take advantage of the

outreach mission for its convenience as this saves them the needed trip to New York City or Washington DC for the services they need. The people save not only the travel costs but also time when they go to the center during the outreach program.

Last March 2, 2019 the

center opened at 8:00 in the morning to get the place ready. A day before, Diana Bondad had put together a team of volunteers. She assigned the responsibilities of



PCSNJ AND CONSULATE: A PARTNERSHIP (continued from page 1)

with specifically labeled tables according to the services they will transact. An intake sign-in table was also set up. People would sign in and inform the intake volunteers the nature of their business. The intake workers would then direct them to sit near the area of the appropriate tables and wait for the numbers they were given to be called.

Many people came for passport renewal or acquisition of new ones, retention or reacquisition of Philippine citizenship, registration of birth, report of marriage, notarization and/or authentication of legal documents, for NBI clearances and other legal matters.

PCSNJ provided lunch for the both the consular

staff members and the volunteers who needed to take turns to eat. The consular services proceeded the whole day without interruption until the center finally closed around 4:30 pm to take souvenir pictures and to clean up.

Diana pointed out the praiseworthy commitment of PCSNJ Inc. in serving the community. There were 22 members who readily volunteered and worked tirelessly and efficiently with the consul general staff the whole day. And as one Filipino who acquired dual citizenship was leaving he gave a remark that made people feel really great. "They even served with a smile!"



THE TRADITION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE CONTINUES

The Philippine Community of Southern New Jersey, Inc. (PCSNJ) continues its commitment to community service in 2018-2019. Since that time, two Consular Outreaches were held at the Philippine Community Center, an exercise-focused research study was completed with Temple University, scholarship, caroling, line-dancing, and Zumba programs continue with enthusiasm and regularity.

The strength and vibrancy of our organization resides in you our members and officers.

Your dedication is the lifeblood of this organization and is the fuel that sparks our wealth of activity. Your hard work continues to inspire. Constant activity and the success of our rental tenants have made our Community Center a place of convergence for camaraderie and fellowship.

Our organization continues to grow and our current leadership is committed to improving our imprint on the community while honoring our past traditions. They committed to innovation and excellence while safe-

guarding the PCSNJ's core values. Our organization is in capable and qualified hands, and I am excited for what lies ahead. I am confident that the PCSNJ will continue to exemplify community service and preserve its traditions in the years to come.

By Jonathan C. Magpantay, Esq.



INDUCTION 2019: A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

By: Sylvia Tagle - Chairman, Induction Committee

The planning started a year early with the committee brainstorming where and when to hold the event, and what the theme is. The venue should be big enough to hold 200-250 guests at least, should have a big dancing floor as we Filipinos love to dance and of course good food is a very important part of it. So the venue was settled to be at Auletto's for August 25, 2018. Invitations were printed and mailed/ hand delivered to all members and friends. Preparations were in full force, with a good number of help from members, everything slowly came into fruition.

And the day came, it was a beautiful night. Women dressed in their elegant evening gowns/ cocktail dresses/ Filipiniana outfits, men in their formal suits or barong. Guests enjoyed the cocktail hour of delicious hot and cold hors d'oeuvres. Formal introduction of guests by the Masters of Ceremonies, Grace Calvelo Rustia and Mike Palis opened the program. National Anthems rendered by Patrick Cueto and the PCSNJ, Inc choir. Father Jay Phillip Ramos- the Parochial Vicar of The Catholic Community of Christ Our Light gave the invocation and blessings. Welcome address was given by President-Elect Cynthia Aragoncillo. Dinner choices of chicken dish,

Mahi Mahi and Prime Rib was served. Some guests preferred to dance saying they were too full to eat the main course served. Music was provided by DJ Willie's Entertainment.

The program continued after dinner with the introduction of the guest speaker by Margie Wilson. Allegra Bermudez, our speaker, is a young Filipino-American who is one of the EAGLES cheerleaders. She holds a position of Program coordinator at Venti Community Partnership which in her current role, she strives to educate and improve today's youth in the Philadelphia area about healthy eating habits. It was just fitting that the induction theme was Health and Fitness.

The induction of the new set of officers and council members was conducted by Susan Shin Angulo- a freeholder in Camden County and presently running for the next mayor of Cherry Hill. The speeches of the new President Diana Bondad and PC president Isabella Lombardo were



delivered. The main highlight of the evening was a presentation of PCSNJ members and friends. It was a rigodon dance, just awesomely and perfectly rendered. The group of 20 couples patiently practiced for months at the community center. It was a challenge to gather all of them at the same time. There was never a time that all 40 of them practiced together but they really did great that night! Kudos to Diana Bondad for the choreography and the patience for teaching such a big group. Brief Acknowledgment was given by Immediate Past President

Jonathan Magpantay. The dance floor was never empty from ballroom dancing, to hip hop dancing and of course line dancing. It was a truly amazing night, everything seemed so perfect. There was also a photo booth which everyone took advantage of for a nominal fee with cool backgrounds of historical Philippine sceneries

Congratulations and more power to the new set of officers and council members of PCSNJ, Inc.

God bless us all !



RIGODON DE HONOR by Ruben Alvarez

Dance has always been a part of the Philippine culture. We all are still very familiar with the folk dances of the different regions in the Philippines. They are even made popular because of the formation of different dance troupes like the Bayanihan, Filipinasca, Filipiniana, and Kalipayan etc. dance troupes. Almost every Filipino knows what is "tinikling" or "Pandango sa Ilaw". These dances are often staged during fiestas or during some school affairs.

The Rigodon de Honor is part of our dance culture but this is a dance not usually performed on the stage. What more the performers are not exactly trained folk dance stage dancers. The dance is usually performed on a large dance floor during formal dance affairs and what more the dancers are often regarded as highly re-

spected citizens and important community leaders. One understands therefore why the dance is called "Rigodon de Honor" or "Reel of Honor".

The dancers are dressed in formal wears and arranged in four lines forming a square. Opposite lines often interact with each other using various marching steps and simple turns. The whole dance often ends with the "cadena" or the "chain" steps where the men and women weave though each other in a big circle.

During the last induction ball, PCSNJ decided to dance the Rigodon de Honor. Diana Bondad and Willie Delfin worked together as the dance teachers. It proved to be a daunting task to gather dancers together since many dancers have professional responsibilities that permit very little free time. Although the dance is made up of simple steps they are nonetheless preci-

sion steps which must be done synchronously by all. If one dancer makes a mistake the synchronicity is broken and everybody's step will no longer fit in the overall dance pattern. This necessitated a series of long practices. There were good natured funny remarks directed to those who made mistakes. But there were also times when annoyance prevailed after repeating the dance so many times and still not getting it done correctly. Before frustration really got the better of everyone, the dancers took breaks to enjoy the food prepared by Diana Bondad and her friends. By taking a break the tension was diffused and one even joked that he liked to make mistakes as the more mistakes he made the faster Diana brought out the refreshments. People also started to know each other better and ultimately felt at ease helping one another to master the dance. Taka

Lugtu also made the practice more pleasant with her fondness for taking pictures and posting the photos on Facebook for all to enjoy.

There was never a practice when all the dancers were present. This is understandable since many of the dancers have important and demanding jobs and cannot just take off to practice. However during the night of the induction ball, of course all were present and to everyone's surprise, and to the absolute delight of the president Diana Bondad and Willie Delfin, the two teachers, the dance was done to perfection! Perhaps the splendid attires, the presence of a large audience, and the total ambiance of the induction's elegance brought out the best in each dancer. But those extended practices accompanied by sumptuous dinners eventually paid off and they certainly paid off well.



Where I'm From

By: Melinda Crotty

I am from the vast woods,
From majestic trees and falling leaves.
I am from the brick house that I have lived in for several years,
And the delicious rice.
I am from the thorn of a rose,
The apple tree,
Whose long gone limbs I remember
As if they were my own.

I'm from the Filipinos and the strong.
From friends and family.
I'm from the fun and the proud,
And from days of thoughtful presents,

I'm from the upstanders and independent women,
And "If I believe"
I'm from Pollyanna,
I'm from New Jersey and the Philippines,
Egg rolls and crabs,
From the bully on the boat,
To te bully in the water,
Grandpa in the kayak,

THE FILIPINOS — A PATCH IN THE MAKING OF THE GREAT AMERICAN QUILT by Leopoldo Cariño

Today, PCSNJ, INC. celebrates Asian-American Heritage Month. From a Congress mandated ten-day in May nationwide celebration of everything Asian, it has become a month long tribute to our achievements and contributions and of our Asian sisters' and brothers' to the enrichment of this country's fabric this great American Quilt, that has become our second home.

America is a great melting pot of different races, religions, beliefs and ethnicities. For generations, it has welcomed to its shores peoples from all over the world. It has also embraced the marginalized sector of society from other countries, among them "your poor, your tired, your huddled masses yearning to breath free," "epitomized in the Emma Lazarus poem as inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty.

Gleaning from historical records, it has been noted that as early as mid-eighteenth century a group of Filipinos, deserters from the Spanish

ships from the Manila Galleon trade, established a settlement in St. Malo in southeast Louisiana along the shore of Lake Borgne. But the great migration happened when the Philippines became a Commonwealth of the United States. Drovers of Filipinos came to Hawaii to work in the sugarcane and pineapple plantations. Also, California became a magnet for our countrymen to work in the fertile fields of the Imperial Valley near Stockton, the oldest Filipino settlement in California made famous as the locale in the literary works of Carlos Bulosan and tangentially on Bienvenido Santos' theme of alienation, loneliness and exile.

But earlier in the 1900's and continuing after the war, our country's illustrious young men and women the best and the brightest, were sent to the United States to study engineering, chemistry, medicine, agronomy, law, literature, and other disciplines. Called "pensionados," they eventually became the

leaders the bulwarks and ramparts, the sum and substance, in nation building in preparation for eventual independence.

In our area around the 1920's because of the sprawling Philadelphia Naval Shipyards, young Filipinos joined its workforce. They Started families, settled, and became matrix of the community. The next great wave of Filipino migration happened in the 1960's during the Kennedy years, and thereafter with Lyndon Johnson's The Great Society program where Filipino professionals, mostly doctors, nurses, engineers, accountants, and scientists, came to the United States to partake in President Johnson's bold initiative and to seek better opportunities. In the 1990's Filipinos came to work in the emerging and burgeoning computer field. Living in another country, we surround ourselves with familiar surroundings to cope with unfamiliar territory — festivals and rites are reenacted, local customs and practices transplanted, and roots established.

Nowadays, in our area and the whole United States you find us in almost all professional fields. Our own Filipino cooking has been discovered and embraced as mainstream.

We are prominently featured and represented in politics, government, the arts, literature, fashion, the sciences. We are competing. We are excelling. We have arrived. from Philadelphia to the South and North, from Jenkintown to Elkins Park to the Main Line, from Mt.Holly to Mt Laurel, from Cherry Hill to Washington Township to the little towns of Delaware, and to other neighborhoods of the whole width and breadth of this country, from sea to shining sea, Filipinos and our fellow Asians have carved a niche of their own and have considered these enclaves of peace and quiet as an ideal place to establish families, mend fences, and nurture friendships among neighbors and communities. Us and our Asia neighbors have done well, indeed.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE by Ali Magpantay

On behalf of our President Diana Bondad, our current officers and all members I am so joyful to welcome the following new members of PCSNJ, INC., an organization founded based in volunteerism:

2018

Mary Lou Stefanko
Ray & Margie Wilson

2019

Lifetime Members:
Jenny Compuesto
Alexis Santos
Fr. Jay Philip Ramos
Reginald and Jamille

Ramos

Emile M. Rotaeché

Alexander Scott

Annual Members:

Ian Lim
Carmenchu Dela Torre
Lory Camba Opem

PC Youth

Dominic Scott

Seniors:

Zinnia Bonilla
Mildred Saldana
Winnie Castillo
We are looking forward to your participation and commitment.

GENERAL CLEANING OF THE PHILIPPINE COMMUNITY CENTER

Hosting a cleanup can feel pretty daunting but of course, you have to know the basic. For the cleanup you will need supplies like brooms, mops, spray cleaners, vacuum, two (2) Robot cleaners and of course food to feed the cleaners.

A general cleanup brings volunteers together to clean, repair and improve spaces.

On October 20, 2018 at 8:00 am general cleaning of the center begun.

Helping hands are the

most important ingredient for a successful outcome. Sharing the work, letting people do different jobs that appeal to them makes the cleanup light and easy. Cleanup of the center was equally distributed amongst the following volunteers: Cynthia Aragoncillo- mopped floor. Diana Bondad- cleaned and organized the President's Office and Supply Room. Veronica Canlas- cleaned, scrubbed floor and organized the kitchen. Agnes Delfin- vacuumed entire area Willy Delfin- cleaned and

organized the Conference Room. Emma de Jesus- cleaned and organized the Library. Senen Fontanilla - cleaned light fixtures and threw out junks. Alien Magpantay- sorted items in the Conference Room and organized the Library. Chel Rodriguez- vacuumed sofa, chairs and foyer. Emma Sosa- cleaned all mirrors and glass fixtures. Sylvia Tagle- cleaned supply room, sorted documents and other paper-works. Margie Wilson- cleaned, scrubbed floor and organized the kitchen/ refrigerator.

All in all, the cleanup day was very successful and definitely made our Philip-



pine Community Center a cleaner place and it at least made us feel more positive about keeping the place clean. I thank all the volunteers in sharing their precious time in helping keep our home clean.

MABUHAY ANG PCSNJ, INC.!!

By Diana Bondad

FILIPINO LANGUAGE PROGRAM STARTS JUNE 1 TO JULY 15, 2019

We are so pleased to announce that PCSNJ is currently having the Filipino (commonly called Tagalog) Language class thru the Educational Committee, at the Philippine Community Center on Saturdays, starting June 1 up to June 29 from 10-11:30AM.

This introductory program is focused on initial greetings and short conversations, history and Philippine culture, members of the family, giving and getting directions and Filipino games. This program's goal is to instill Filipino values and be proud of their heritage among participants, families, friends and community. Filipino heritage and non-heritage participants from middle school to high school levels are attending this class. A weekly electronic commu-

ity and a monthly meeting among participants are being planned to further develop the Filipino language skills of the participants.

This Filipino language program was carefully planned and taught by Linda B. Juliano, Filipino Language Director and Instructor, Carmen dela Torre, program coordinator and Joy Scott, registration coordinator.

We acknowledge volunteer instructors who shared their teaching skills in the language and culture: Reginald Ramos and Ruben Alvarez.

Members and non-members are invited to come to the closing ceremony to be held on Saturday, June 29 1-2:30PM where participants will show-case songs, poems and dances which they learned during this short course.

By Linda Juliano



From The Senior Citizen Committee

By Arelynne Pacho-Ramos, Chairman: Senior Citizen Committee

We have a vibrant group of seniors within PCSNJ that continue to contribute to the mission and vision of our organization. Seniors are defined as those who are 65 and older. Our mantra is to support the Center, our committees and seniors in the community. Here are our activities for the past two years.

1. In October 2017, we held a successful October Heritage Celebration at the "Palace" in which 160 young and old witnessed our traditions, participating in the "Flores de Mayo" a tradition of presenting flowers to the Virgin Mary, showing respect to their elders, through the "mano po" practice of putting the hand of the elder to their foreheads, learning about the Filipino wedding tradition, learning about the Philippine flag, and drawing it for a prize etc. Families' names were called out and presented as well.

2. In May 2018, The Senior supported the Filipiniana Committee headed by Emma Sosa in the Asian American Heritage Program at the Center. Music by the rondalla of Connie Garcia, a performance by the line dancers, a show of flags by the PCY and many more numbers were presented after a free lunch for the Community. A heritage Book was also published with each family presenting

their traditions and values.

3. Another Asian Heritage Program was held this May 2019 and the Senior Citizen Program contribution was called "The Asian Kitchen" featuring Ruben Alvarez and Jingkie Aseron. Together they demonstrated different noodles used in Filipino kitchens as well as how to prepare pancit Malabon.

4. Annual Memorial Service Liturgy is another regular activity sponsored by the Senior Citizen Committee. Last November 3, 2018, Co Chairs Aida Camba and Chel Rodriguez and co-sponsor Christ Our Light Prayer Group led by Alex Giron requested Fr. Victorino Coronado to lead the prayers for those who passed away. For the first time, we had pictures of deceased community members projected on our screen which added a new dimension to the event. It was well received, and will be an ongoing additional project of gathering as many pictures for the November 2019 memorial service. Please email these pictures to Chel Rodriguez at chei-rod@yahoo.com.

5. On December 1, 2018 the Committee held a trip to Longwood Garden. Co-Chairs Jingkie Aseron and Arelynne Pacho-Ramos were assisted by Santos Travel. Some of the money from sand Empanada sale defrayed the cost of the bus. Thirty five people joined the bus trip and enjoyed the day immensely

seeing the famous Longwood Garden transforms itself into a ristmas Wonderland. We were please that three of those who joined the trip expressed interest in becoming PCSNJ members.

6. A regular at the Community center that we encourage the seniors to attend is Wednesday Line dancing. Not only does it help to stave off weakening of bones and muscles, it is also a fun way to meet new people and exchange ideas, especially during the monthly birthday celebration. The line dancing led by Purie and Jerry Ancheta has served as welcoming activity for Filipinos in the community for the past 13 years.

7. We realized the need to support our senior members as well shut-ins who might feel isolated and in need of more contact with the community. Support can come in the form of sending letters, telephone calls, vis-

iting, praying with and for the shut-in. We will, also come up with an inventory if equipments people are willing to share or donate to those who need them. We will also try to organize and arrange volunteers to drive shut-ins to doctor appointments, attend functions at the center or to buy groceries or to attend to other personal functions.

Sub-leaders have been assigned and will first identify those in need of support

1. Camden County- Chel Rodriguez

2. Gloucester County - Glo Salugao and Linda Julianao

3. Burlington County - Lita Cabida

These ongoing activities show that the seniors are still actively contributing towards our center and our organization's longevity.

CALLING ALL GOLFERS!

Once again, the Philippine Community of Southern New Jersey is sponsoring a Fall Golf Tournament on Saturday, October 26, 2019. at Ramblewood Golf Course, Mount Laurel, NJ. It is a major fundraiser for PCSNJ's many programs as well as for the Community Center maintenance. Registration starts at 7:30 and shotgun start is 8:30 am. The event will be capped with a 12-3 pm Filipino Lunch Celebration and Awards Ceremony at the

Ramblewood Ballroom.

We are looking for golfers and sponsors, as well as raffle basket contributors. Golf registration fee is \$120 per person. Lunch ticket is \$30 per person. Hole sponsor is \$100.

Golf is a wonderful game of relaxation and challenge. It helps develop discipline, focus while allowing enjoyment of the outdoors with fellow golfers. Set sight where the (continued on page 14)

PCSNJ, Inc. — Literally A-c-t-i-v-e! By Cynthia Aragoncillo

2017 and 2018 were active years for PCSNJ, Inc. Not only did the organization carry out activities such as a Golf Tournament, Christmas Extravaganza, a Tea Party, and the like, but it also motivated a good number of its members to be more physically active.

In collaboration with Temple University, Kinesiology Department contributors, and Ms. Aisha Bhimla, MPH, PhD Candidate, PCSNJ, Inc. tackled important Filipino community issues about chronic illnesses: heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Here's how. **Filipino Women and Physical Activity**

From March 1 to May 1, 2017, 21 Filipino women were recruited to participate in a pilot study called "Filipino Women and Physical Activity". Its objective was: "To assess the acceptability, feasibility, and potential effects of a community-based Zumba ® program on health and physical outcomes including Body Mass Index (BM°, weight, flexibility, blood pressure, circumference, aerobic fitness, and exercise motivation among midlife Filipino women." Zumba was selected as the mode of exercise primarily due to its nature of dance which is a common part of the Filipino culture. Additionally, Zumba is a globally known cardio workout and has gained popularity within PCSNJ, Inc. The Philippine Community Center's Zumba program has been participated by members and non-members for more than 6 years.

During this exploratory

study, Zumba classes were held for 8 weeks, and the 21 Filipino women danced to Cha-cha, Merengue, Bachata, Cumbia, Hip-hop, Tango, Reggaeton, etc., while their Fitbits tracked the targeted 10,000 steps daily. Each session was between 60 and 75 minutes during their 3 classes per week! Whew—those are LOTS of dancing AND calories burned!

The following are the highlighted results after only an 8-week study." Average weight lost: 3 pound
Decrease in Systolic Blood Pressure
8.81 mm
Decrease in Diastolic Blood Pressure:
0.00 mmHg
Decrease in Body Mass Index (BMI):
0.44 kg/m²
Decrease in Waist Circumference:
1.33 inches

The Filipino Women and Physical Activity Study conducted by Temple University with PCSNJ, Inc. concluded: Filipino Americans, an underserved population can receive benefits through an enhanced physically active lifestyle and in using exercise technology to monitor and track their physical activity levels throughout their life. Through participating in the exercise program, they may gain direct physical and psychological benefits that may enhance their quality of life.

*Excluded food and nutrition factors

Let's Get PHit!

Not long after the Filipino Women and Physical Activity pilot Study concluded, and on June 7, 2017, PCSNJ, Inc. was approved for almost a \$5,000 Grant by the Association for Applied Sports Psychology. This community outreach program titled — Get PHit! was another successful collaboration between PCSNJ, Inc. and Temple University.

The mission of Get PHit! was to extend knowledge and services into a larger community with a specific focus on an underserved population — Filipino Americans. This Community Outreach by PCSNJ, Inc. aimed to empower the Filipino community to increase physical activity literacy and become more active in their daily life.

Empowered and motivated by this Grant award, representatives of PCSNJ, Inc. immediately formed a Get PHit! Committee. This committee formulated the Program's 6-month timeline and gathered available resources. The Committee comprised of the following passionate leaders: Dr. Liz Fong-Deleon
Jon Magpantay
Diana Bondad
Frances Estrella
Sylvia Tagle
Aisha Bhimla
Cynthia Aragoncillo
Two (2) major components of the Get PHit! initiative were its Physical Activities (PA) and Educational Workshops. This

PCSNJ, Inc. program kicked off on March 1st and was attended by more than 70 Filipinos.

The Workshops laid the foundation for the Filipino community's understanding, or in some cases, a review, of the prevalent diseases among Filipinos, the benefits of physical activity, how to set goals and use "mindfulness" to help achieve goals, and many more.

The Get PHit Workshops were led by specially trained Filipino Physical Activity Community Advocates (FPACAs). FPACAs underwent 12 hours of training at Temple University's Kinesiology Department. Their training consisted not only of the technical techniques about presenting health information but learning about their important role and expectations around this Filipino community outreach.

The FPACAs were:

Noreen Delfin
Jem Palma
Margie Wilson
Irma Silva
Connor Pagkalinawan
Alyssa De Guzman

This PA portion of the program was where everyone got moving! Hand-in-hand with the Workshops, the physical activities were held weekly from March 1st to July 24th, 2018. The Program touched about 70 participants. It concluded with its finale and special event dubbed "Game Ka Na Ba?" where participants played all Filipino games such as Patintero, Tumbang Preso, and the like. This event was (continued on page 14)

LINE DANCING AS I EXPERIENCED IT

By Ruben Alvarez

It has been two years since I joined line dancing. I was an avid trained ballroom dancer, but after a series of serious illnesses I stopped dancing altogether. After a serious bout of Guillain Barre' Syndrome and months of intensive physical therapy I regained my ability to walk without support but my sense of balance and coordination had been seriously affected. I could no longer dance at the high level that I was used to before the illness. Although my physical therapist as well as my wife advised me to try to go back to dancing as that may further improve my balance and coordination I decided against it. I was thinking I would just look ridiculous trying to dance when I can no longer do it well. Instead of dancing decided to just work out in a gym. I was very particular in my choice of a gym as I wanted one with less people when I go to exercise. I wanted to be able to take my time using exercise machines without young able bodied men waiting impatiently for me to get done. I can no longer exercise with the speed that I used to before my illnesses. Luckily I found such a gym in Philadelphia. I told my wife I will just start going to the gym and she was very supportive about it. However she still continued advising me to try to go back to dancing to recapture its joy in addition to its physical rehabilitation benefits.

It was in that gym I first

met Julius. I did not really talk with him as he was a lot fairer than most Filipinos and I thought he was a white Puerto Rican who just wanted to get his exercise routine done as fast as he could and leave the gym. I was surprised however when he approached me and started talking in Tagalog. He became my exercise buddy and before long we got to know each other better. It was also during this time I was first willing to try line dancing at the prodding of my wife. At this time, Julius also complained to me that since most of his friends had moved away, his social life had become very limited and boring. I thought that if I was going to line dancing, which I had never done before, it might be a good idea to take Julius with me. He was also like me with an extensive background in ballroom dancing but totally unfamiliar with line dancing. We can at least support each other. In addition, this would be a good opportunity for Julius to meet new people, acquire new friends and hopefully enhance his social life. And sure enough, Julius agreed to go with me when I invited him.

When we got to the PCSNJ community center I felt more relaxed seeing I know many of the line dancers who were also members of the organization. The people greeted us warmly and I took it upon myself to introduce Julius to the dancers I already know. Jerry and Annabelle, the volunteer teachers, made sure that the experienced dancers would dance around us from all sides so that wherever we

might be facing there will be someone we could watch and imitate. Julius and I soon discovered that our ballroom dance background was really a big help in learning line dance step routines. Presently Julius and I are now considered experienced dancers. True to my original goal, my coordination and sense of balance improved significantly though not to the same degree as before my illnesses. Julius on the other hand became one of the excellent dancers and has since been joining a group of dancers who perform during various affairs of other numerous organizations. During rehearsals and public performances Julius has acquired new sets of friends and his social calendar has been busy. He no longer complains about leading a boring life.

The line dancing committee plays a vital role in keeping PCSNJ a vibrant and relevant organization. To start with, there is a lot of interest in the community to do line dancing for various personal reasons like to exercise, to meet new friends, or simply to have fun or as in my case as a sort of physical therapy rehabilitation. The line dancing program meets all those community needs.

As a member of PCSNJ I have always felt that the organization should have strong committees so that it could fulfill its mission and vision of serving the community. Line dancing

(continued on page 10)

as a committee is exactly that. It is strong, united and focused. It accomplishes this by simply replicating what the founders of the organization did during the early years, not only to increase its membership but also to bind a closer unity with all its members.

The leaders of line dancing appreciate everyone for joining. Realizing many are coming to line dancing directly from work the committee chairman and later joined by some dancers make sure there is something to eat for dinner when they arrive. Once a month, just exactly what the founders did during its early years, there is a birthday potluck party to celebrate those born in the month. The dancing stops for an hour or so while all sit down together to share a meal. These birthday parties are open to all members of PCSNJ, their families and friends regardless of whether they are regular participants of line dancing or not. All are actually invited and encouraged to come. All the guests pay the birthday party entrance fee of \$7.00 but the birthday celebrants are admitted for free. The line dancing committee also requests all to bring a dish to contribute to the pot luck meal. The dancing resumes after the meal. Hence when one joins line dancing, one gets the feeling it is not all about raising funds through the collection of

LINE DANCING AS I EXPERIENCED IT (continued from page 10)

the entrance fees. One gets the feeling of joining a closely knitted group of supportive friends who share the same passion for dancing and all who enjoy being together. This ambiance has kept dancers coming back every week and even bringing their friends and ultimately increasing the number of people who attend regularly.

The usual entrance fee of \$6.00 (\$7.00 when there is a party) has also been a significant source of funds for the organization. The present plan is to allocate 40% of the money it generates towards the building maintenance. The income of line dancing had been used to extend the wooden floor area as well as in installing a wall of mirrors. The line dancers were also able to procure some speakers and floor fans and a few tables for the center. The rest of the line dancing income has been directed to fund the Lily Ancheta Memorial Scholarship program. Lily Ancheta was the late wife of Jerry, the volunteer line dance teacher. Lily was also a member of PCSNJ who succumbed to cancer years ago. It was Lily's dream to make a significant impact on the lives of poor Filipinos. Jerry and his present wife, Purie, who was also a close friend of Lily, never forgot Lily's dream. The couple decided to form the Lily Scholarship Program. The two reasoned that the fund

should help poor ordinary students who are not necessarily honor students. They felt that there are already many scholarship programs that benefit honor students. There are hardly any scholarships for students who get decent passing grades but are not in the honor role or in the dean's list. Jerry and Purie envision the Ancheta Memorial Scholarship as more in the area of charity grant in complimentary to the PCSNJ Filipiniana Scholarship in the Philippines which is granted based on both financial need and very strict high academic requirements. As such the Lily Ancheta Memorial Fund has produced two graduates from the college of education. True to the feeling of charity these graduates feel, both of them opted to teach in the remote areas of the Mountain Province. They want to make a difference in the lives of his students just as the grant they got from the Lily Ancheta Memorial Fund made a significant difference in their lives.

The Lily Ancheta fund has also contributed to the High School Filipiniana awards and to the Achievement Recognition

Night of PCSNJ. It has consistently funded the Leadership Award to the outgoing president of the PCSNJ- Youth Group. Jerry and Purie believe that these awards are important in encouraging academic excellence in the high school students in our community. However the real priority of the Lily Ancheta Fund is to help poor but deserving students right in the Philippines. They reasoned that the real need for assistance is right in the Philippines. This is especially true when students who live in the remote barrios must move to the city where the universities they are to attend are located. It is well and good if they have relatives in the city who are willing to take them in for free. But if they do not, they need assistance to pay room and board which are often more expensive than the tuition costs.

Speaking as an ordinary member of the community I am grateful to PCSNJ for providing the line dance program. I am hoping the organization will continue to provide this program to us. It is my hope that more will come and be regular members of the line dance program. In the process of having fun people are actually

contributing to something noble as they are helping to send poor students to college who will eventually rescue their families out of the misery of poverty.

And to those who are worried they do not know how to dance you should not. Our new member, Suk Lee, is simply having fun though she still has to learn a lot of steps. And then there is Ian Christopher Lim who everyone likes to adopt for being such a perfect gentleman. In the short span of a few months he has become a seasoned dancer. He is now often placed in the most visible section of the choreography when

he performs with the group of experienced dancers to represent PCSNJ in public performances. And YES the line dancers have become ambassadors of good will for PCSNJ. Their continued performances during public events and during the events of other organizations as representatives of PCSNJ, the line dancers have further cemented the presence of the organization as a vibrant, relevant and vital part of the overall Filipino community.



SANTA CRUZAN AND FLORES DE MAYO By Ruben Alvarez

Although Santa Cruzan and Flores de Mayo are really different the two have become very closely intertwined in the Philippine culture. The Santa Cruzan was a celebration of the events that lead to the discovery of the cross that was used in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Emperor Constantine of Rome was the first Christian emperor who stopped the persecution of Christians and sanctioned Christianity as a religion. The story goes that Emperor Constantine dreamt of being asked to go to battle in behalf of the Holy Cross. His victories in all these battles lead to his conversion to Christianity. His mother Queen Helena, inspired by all these experiences went on a quest to the Holy Land in 326 AD to find the Holy Cross on which Jesus Christ was supposed to have been nailed. She found in the Holy Land what can best be described as a "junk yard" of old used wooden crosses. She found a cross with a plank of wood with the inscription INRI still nailed to it. Queen Helena took with her several people with various infirmities. One was at the brink of death when they arrived at the place where the old crosses were discarded. When the dying person touched the cross he instantly got well. Other infirmed people also miraculously got well upon touching the cross. Queen Helena then was sure she found what she was look-

ing for. She took the cross back to Rome where the people met her in a joyful celebration. Later she splintered the cross and distributed the splinters to various Christian temples. May is the month dedicated to the Virgin Mary and celebrated by offering flowers to her. Thus came the celebration "Flores de Mayo" in the Philippines. The offering of the flowers is done in the form of a procession commemorating how Christianity came to the Philippines, some prominent figures described in the bible, some praises and titles bestowed on the Virgin Mother, and finally a commemoration of the quest of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena. Thus the intertwined Santa Cruzan and Flores de Mayo have participants in the procession called "sagalas" to represent the following: From the history of the Christian Faith in the Philippines: Reina Banderada — originally she carries a triangular flag, which has now been replaced by the Philippine Flag, to commemorate the coming of Christianity to the Philippines when the Spaniards landed in Homonhon in the Visayan Islands. Reina Mora — she represents the Muslim religion which was the dominant religion before Christianity came to the Philippines. The Aetas — usually three people all painted in black walk together in the procession to represent the

unconverted natives in the mountains of Luzon From the Old Testament: Reina Judith — she was described as beautiful and intelligent woman who loved God and her nation. She used her impeccable beauty to behead the cruel scourge of her nation, General Holofernes. She usually carries in the procession a sword and a transparent bag where a severed head can be seen inside. Reina Sheba — she was the Queen of Sheba who met King Solomon. Upon seeing the wisdom of Solomon she heaved praises on Solomon and converted. God rewarded her with great joy and even greater wealth. She carries a box filled with jewelry in the procession. Reina Esther - She was beautiful girl who became a queen. When one of the leaders of the army of King Xerxes ordered the execution of the Jews, Queen Esther, the beloved of the king, confessed that she too must be executed for she was also a Jew. So the king himself stopped the execution. She carries a scepter in the procession. Commemoration of 6 memorable women from the New Testament: The Samaritan Woman — Jesus talked to her at the well where she was offered to drink the "Living Water". She became a believer and spread the news through Sumaria to seek and to listen to Jesus.

She usually carries a water jug.

Veronica she was the woman who wiped the face of Jesus while carrying the cross. The cloth took an impression of the bloody face of Jesus. She carries a white cloth with the face of Jesus printed on it.

Tres Marias (three women walking together) — commemorating the three women who went and found the tomb of Jesus empty.

A) Mary of Magdala — carries a bottle of perfume

B) Mary of Joanna — carries a handkerchief

C) Mary, the mother of James the disciple — carries a bottle of oil Commemoration of the many titles of the Virgin Mary.

The commemorations of the tiles start with young boys each carrying a letter spelling "Ave Maria".

Divina Pastora (Mother Mary — the Divine Shepherdess) — the mother of Jesus the Supreme Shepherd, Jesus Christ. She carries a shepherd's staff

Reina de las Estrellas (Mary — Queen of the Stars)

She carries a wand with a star.

Rosa Mystica — (Mary — The Mystical Rose.) She carries a bouquet of roses.

Reina de Paz. (Mary — Queen of peace.) She carries a white dove as (continued on page 12)

SANTA CRUZAN (continued from page 11)

a symbol of peace.
Reina de las Profetas — (Mary — Queen of prophets.) She carries an hourglass.

Reina del Cielo -- (Mary -- Queen of !leaven.) She carries a -flower.

Reina de las Virgenes (Mary - Queen of Virgins.) She walks in the procession carrying a rosary and surrounded by angels.

Reina de las Flores (Mary- Queen of flowers,) She carries a bouquet of flowers.

Reina Abogada -- (Mary -- Defender of the poor.) She wears a black graduation cap and carries a big book. Reina Justicia (Mary — Queen of justice.) She carries a weighing scale and a sword.

Reina de la Esperanza (Mary- Queen of hope) She carries an anchor

Reina de la Fe — (Mary- Queen of faith.) She carries a cross.

Reina de la caridad. (Mary - Queen of charity) She carries a red heart
Finally at the end is the commemoration of Queen Helena

1. Reyna Elena Emperatriz — the founder of the cross of Jesus Christ. She marches with a young boy to depict her son as the young Constantine. She carries a cross.

A band singing "Dios De Salve" is usually and the end of the procession.

After the procession the participants, their families and friends come to a feast offered by the sponsor of the procession

called the "Hermana Mayor". Young children who participated in the procession often go home with a small bag of goodies called "pamana".

In some areas the "Hermana Mayor: changes from year to year. If this is the case, the succeeding "Hermana Mayor" is announced and cheered during the feast. But is some areas the "Hermana Mayor" stays the same from year to year. This usually happens when a family sponsors the procession as a form of a continuing religious pledge called "panata". Filipinos who immigrated to the USA has brought along this religious tradition to their communities and Cheny Hill is no exception.

Under the leadership of the FIAT religious organization, headed by Girlie Cosico, the various parishes have been taking turns in sponsoring the Santa Cruzan. This year, Christ Our Light Church, with the blessings of Fr. Tom Newton, the pastor, sponsored the Santa Cruzan. Bingle Tagle, the over-all coordinator from Church Our Light with Diana Bondad, the president of PCSNJ and other members of the organization and members of various prayer groups, worked cooperatively and organized over a hundred participants of the Santa Cruzan. It started with a mass where the

bishop of Camden, Bishop Sullivan concelebrated. Then an array of beautiful sagalas splendid in their beautiful outfits and many boys in their barongs and girls dressed like angels walked in a procession around the block. True to the Filipino tradition, the affair ended with a feast at the big function room of the church. Before the food was served, the Reyna Elena, Isabella Gracelin Rustia Serrano, placed the crown of flowers on the head of the statue of the Virgin Mary. This was followed by the other participants of the Santa Cruzan who also placed flowers at the image of the Virgin Mother.

Bishop Sullivan thanked the Filipino community for sharing their religious traditions with the USA. Besides the Simbang Gabi he adds the Santa Cruzan as important contributions of the Filipinos to the spiritual life of the church.

In some communities of the Philippines, the people have made some modifications to the procession. They believe that in the midst of the beauty and pageantry of the Santa Cruzan, its religious and spiritual aspects should be emphasized more. The people added banners before the sagalas on which they wrote short prayer notations. For example, in the section of the procession where the titles given to the Virgin Mary are commemorated, there will be a banner that will say "Mary, Queen of Virgins: Pray for us..".

Behind this banner, the sagala with the sash "Reina de las Virgenes" will be walking. In other areas, the people changed the arches of flowers under which sagalas walk into banners where the prayers are written. In front of the procession, people may witness the Banderada walking under a banner on which people have written "For the Welfare of our Nation: God hear our Prayers" Perhaps the Santa Cruzan will have more modifications in the future. No matter what happens, it will surely be a mainstay of the Philippine culture. Many of us who are now adults still recall the times when we too marched in the Santa Cruzan to commemorate one thing or another. Now we watch with smiles on our faces as we see our own children or grandchildren walking in the same processions.

Editorial Staff

2019 PCSNJ Gazette

Ruben Alvarez - Editor-in-Chief

Senen Fontanilla - Associate Editor

Popoy Arenas - Layout

Contributors

Tina Aquino

Cynthia Aragoncillo

Diana Bondad

Lepoldo Carino

Beth Dizon

Noreen Delfin

Linda Juliano

Sylvia Tagle

Jonathan Magpantay

Arelyne Pacho Ramos

Emma Sosa

Margie Wilson

A NEW LOOK FOR THE CENTER

By Diana Bondad

After looking at the old, scratched old wooden floors Diana Bondad, the current president, and the Council Members decided it is about time to do something about it. Their plan was to pull out the old floors and install new ones. But when the estimate of \$14,000 to do the job proved to be too prohibitive they opted to just sand and resurface the existing floor. On the recommendations of some members of the organiza-

tion, PCSNJ hired Hardwood and Sanding Company that did the job for the final cost of \$2150 in one week. Sennen Fontanilla and Doming Camba were always present when the company was working to make sure the job was done correctly. The Center now boasts of smooth and shiny floors that look brand new.

Diana and the Council did not stop at the new floors. They felt the old orange chairs were scratching the floors when they are

dragged across the room when people put them away after affairs. They are just too heavy to lift and carry to the storage room. With the financial backing of the Zumba committee, 120 new chairs and two chair caddies were acquired for a total cost of \$3973.

The heavy old orange chairs were sold for \$1 a piece to a church in Maryland that happily and promptly took them away. However the Council gave a few chairs free of charge to some members who expressed interest in



having them. The sale of the old chairs netted \$100 for the Center.

EDUCATIONAL

By Margie Wilson

Watch for our upcoming educational events! Filipino Language Class for our youth. The class starts June 1, 2019, Saturday from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. Register your child and see the fun activities they have for you children.

A Filipino Cultural Class exploring our roots and appreciation of our country through hands-on, interactive and cross-curricular activities starting in Sep-

tember, 2019. Let the exciting class take you to a unique journey while on a jeepney ride.

Also, we are excited to have our UPMASA symposium addressing health issues from hypertension to diabetes.

Also, we are featuring recipes to healthy eating and lifestyle. A hands-on experience to making healthy dishes.

MARTIN NIEVERA IN CONCERT

When I presented the idea of raising funds by selling tickets to the Martin Nievera concert, I found out that some members of PCSNJ were not familiar with the artist. I realized then that our organization has diverse age groups, that is, from teenagers to those in their golden years. This meant that not everyone maybe expected to know about Martin Nievera.

So, who is Martin Nievera? Martin Nievera is an iconic Filipino singer, songwriter, whose three decades of popularity earned him the title of "Philippine Concert King". He is also one of the famous artists who helped popularize Original Filipino Music (OPM) in the Philippine Music industry.

When we decided to (continued on page 14)

PCSNJ KARAOKE NIGHT

By Noreen Delfin

Guests at this year's karaoke night were treated to a multitude of games and prizes! The first game tested each person's knowledge of song titles, lyrics and artists. A snippet of a randomly selected song would play on the speakers and the participant would have to answer correctly in order to receive their prize!

The karaoke song book was also passed around the room. Guests were invited to sing solos, duets, and group songs as the lyrics were projected onto the screen at center stage.

Arguably, the most memorable event of the night was a friendly competition among all of the karaoke night guests. The entire room was

organized into several large groups and each group was assigned songs to sing selected at random. Each member of the group was required to sing different portions of the selected songs until the end. This caused the karaoke score either to plummet low or to shoot up on each portion depending on each singer's skill level! At the end of the competition, the highest-scoring group was declared the winner.

Roars of laughter, cheers, and jeers heard during this rousing games and friendly sing-a-longs were clear indications of another successful event at the Philippine Community Center!



CALLING ALL GOLFERS! (continued from page 7)

ball is to land then align the body as you address the ball. Swing the club and hit the ball with good contact and follow through. Follow through, follow through, follow through... A good rhythm helps with consistency.

The joy and discipline in golf is akin to life and living. Open the door of your mind to a goal with mental imagery, then align your talent and resources, prepare physically and mentally, and finally do it. They are all ingredients of a successful life event. A good follow through occurs after making the hit/ event. Cleaning up, making thank you calls or notes, finalizing evaluation, sending receipts, making write ups, paying the vendors are all part of

the closing of the event.

Like in golf, a good follow through in life makes you go a longer way. Not only golfers are needed, but we also need volunteers for registration, donors of raffle baskets, lunch attendees, and program participants. For further inquiries, contact Arelene Pacho-Ramos (pachoramos@aol.com) or Senn Fontanilla (Sennfont (@gmail.com)).

By: Arelene Pacho-Ramos, Chairman
Senen Fontanilla and Jon Magpantay Co-Chairmen

Dementia

By: Loving Son

*Please remember things for me,
Those things that now escape my memory.
Speak the words of a mother's love.*

My son, you are my gift from God above.

*Recall for me all those years,
When I did all to ease your fears.*

*Remember my whispers in your ears,
That turned to laughter your saddest tears.
I am a remnant of the best of what I was,
I am lost in a dark forest of myself.*

*Tell me if I am just hallucinating,
I hear angels who to me are singing.*

I used to guide you in your youth.

*I helped you decipher a myth from a truth.
Now! must depend on you in my darkness
I cope with a world that to me doesn't make sense!
Sometimes I might not remember who you are,*

But! will always recognize what is a smile.

*I can be hurt by impatient frowns and
Will seek comfort from caring and loving arms.*

*In the midst of my pains and sorrows,
In the indignity of the helplessness I suffer*

Remember my son I am firm believer.

Do not hold me back when God calls me yonder.

LITERALLY A-c-t-i-v-e! (continued from page 8)

held on August 12, 2018 at the Philippine Community Center. Game Ka Na Ba? at PC also contributed to Get PHit's celebration of the program's success enjoyed by its participants and leaders through healthy and flavorful dishes, dances, and prizes!

The Physical Activity Instructors were:

Noreen Delfin: Hip-hop
Jess Poon, Certified AGSM:

Strength Training

Diana Bondad: Line Dancing

Cynthia Aragoncillo: Licensed, Zumba Instructor Network (ZIN), Basic and Toning - Zumba

To further motivate participants and to gain the benefits of being physically active and educated around health and wellness, recognition awards to the individuals

who attended the most number of physical activities and workshops, and who lost the most weight, were announced during Get PHit's Game Ka Na Ba? celebration.

The Get PHit! awardees were:

Agnes Delfin = Participant who had the Most Attended Physical Activities and Workshops

Bingle Tagle = Participant with the Most Weight Lost With the newly inducted officers' leadership, members' continued active participation, and strengthened collaboration with partners like Temple University, PCSNJ, Inc. can look forward to continuous improvement, figuratively and literally - in the years to come!

NIEVERA IN CONCERT

By Cynthia Aragoncillo (from page 13)

participate in the ticket sales besides raising funds for PCSNJ we were also supporting and promoting our own Filipino artist. The Martin Nievera's concert tickets resulted in a profit of almost \$800 for PCSNJ! Additionally, PC enjoyed a free advertisement when Martin himself, and his concert producer, Star Media Entertainment, expressed their gratitude for PC's assistance in concert ticket sales before they took their final bows.

So, the next time this opportunity comes again, PCSNJ should not hesitate to get involved. It is a wonderful chance not only to raise funds but also to support world class Filipino artists.



FROM THE FILIPINIANA COMMITTEE By Emma Sosa

The Filipiniana Committee under the able leadership of Emma Sosa with her member Ali Magpantay and Jennifer Rosero has been very active in promoting the cultural mission and vision of PCSNJ. It successfully held its annual Flea Market last September 18, 2018. With a clear and sunny day, many came seeking bargains. The number of vendors has grown offering a variety of interesting items at very affordable prices. To the delight of the shoppers, there were also vendors who sold delicious Filipino food. Many bought the food for lunch and many more bought the numerous Filipino delicacies like suman, puto, kutsinta, turon, lumpiang shanghai to take home. Manang Ketang, one of the food vendors, promised to bring more delicacies next year as people were so disappointed when she ran out of food to sell. Fr. Phillip Ramos was also grateful for

the support he got when many bought raffle tickets he sold for the benefit of the seminary his order, Disciples of Mary, is building in the Philippines. Last May 11, 2019 the Filipiniana had another very successful event. The Asian American Heritage celebration was held at the center. It was emceed by Ailing Magpantay and Cynthia Aragoncillo, Jingkie Aseron and Ruben Alvarez gave a presentation on how to make pancit malabon and distributed the printed recipe of the dish. They also gave out information on the different kinds of noodles and where one can buy Asian cuisine ingredients. Isabella Lombardo, the president of the Youth Group, and her friends showed various flags of Asian countries and explained the meanings of the unique symbolization of each.

The Folk Arts Society rondalla rendered two toe-tapping musical arrangements. Cynthia Aragoncillo and her zumba dancers presented a good-humored choreography of "Hahabol Habol" to the amusement of the audience. There were songs rendered by the tenor Patrick Cueto. The PCSNJ choir's performance gave justice to the composition of Maritz Nieva's song "Ave Maria". The songs done by the two young children Sabrina and Keileen Nicdao were so cute they stole the hearts of the listeners. Arelynne Pachor-Ramos was so proud when she presented a short skit about traffic safety with her grandchildren. The beautiful Margie Wilson, dressed in full Japanese kimono, performed the dainty and graceful Japanese folk dance "Sakura" a dance

about cherry blossoms. During lunch there was also a talk with video presentations on the history of the Philippines by Alexandra de la Torre and Mia de Vera. The audience happily participated when a Cambodian representative taught the Cambodian social circle dance. People walked in one big circle while simultaneously executing graceful hand and finger movements. Finally, John Magpantay, the immediate past president, read a special message written by Paul Carino about the immigration of the Filipinos to the United States. The event ended with a sumptuous lunch of Philippine cuisine complete with sinigang of salmon bellies and pancit malabon. The guests and performers ate together and socialized before all went away holding happy memories of the event.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW

By Ruben Alvarez

The PCSNJ scholarship program has a long history of extending educational benefits to poor but deserving students of the Philippines. This goal even includes serving handicapped students, especially the blind, so they do not end up leading marginalized lives. Since 1986 we have moved forward with our ambitious goal and have successfully awarded multiple scholarships annually. However, our organization thought it would be wise to revisit these awardees to analyze if our program is positively impacting the lives of the poor students living in the Philippines. Through reconnecting with past awardees we look to answer the basic question, "Should we continue to extend the Filipiniana scholarship in the Philippines, or should we direct our efforts elsewhere?" The PCSNJ has reconnected with six past Filipiniana scholarship awardees to answer this question, "Where are they now?"



Antonio Punzalan

In 1987 a totally blind student by the name of Antonio came to Philadelphia, PA and attended the Overbrook

School for the Blind. At this time, computer technology was being integrated in educating the visually impaired. Just knowing the Braille system was inadequate to succeed in academic levels that are suited for normal sighted students, such as college. Through the support provided by Filipiniana Scholarship program, Antonio was able to capitalize on this pivotal time of meshing technology and education for the visually impaired. Support included assistance such as a PCSNJ member opening his home for the duration of his studies at Overbook and members of PCSNJ also welcoming him to their own homes during parties and other get together affairs. Upon returning to the Philippines PCSNJ gave Antonio a complete set of computer programs needed to adapt his computer to the needs of the visually impaired. As result, he handled the complex work at the co-educational institution Philippine Women University. After earning a business degree he opened a trucking and construction business and later collaborated with his parents in starting and running a Montessori school in Pasig which now has over one thousand students enrolled. Antonio lives a full, independent and productive life with dignity and quality. He lives in his own home with his wife, a dentist, and four children.



Criselda, another visually impaired student, attended Overbook School for the blind with the same purpose as Antonio Punzalan. PCSNJ was able to provide her transportation expenses to come to the USA. While completing her training at Overbook she fell in love and ultimately married a classmate from Thailand and moved to his native country. At Thailand she headed the computer department of the Korat Center for the Blind. After several years she moved back to the Philippines and started the Vibes massage parlors. She hires and trains visually impaired people in the massage parlors that have grown into a chain, usually found in malls. She continues to be the Vibes CEO. However, she happily states that her greatest joy in life is her 13 year old daughter



Annemarie Nicole Sanchez was granted full tuition scholarship by PCSNJ. A member also independently gave a direct \$50 monthly allowance. In 2014 Ms. Sanchez earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree at PUP (Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasig). Sadly, two months later her widower father who was simultaneously going deaf and blind passed away leaving her to care for two younger brothers.

Annemarie has been gainfully employed and taking care of her brothers.



Manuel Luis Tongonan and Jericho Agoo received full tuition grants from the Lily Ancheta Memorial Fund. Both earned Bachelor of Education Degrees and both accepted teaching positions at Don Bosco School in the Ifugao region of Mountain Province.

GRANDPARENTS FEEL ...

I just want my grandchildren to grow up fast as we are getting old. I love to see them growing up healthy and to see that our caring for them made a positive impact on their personality. Just being with them gives me a feeling of contentment. This is unconditional love.

By: Ben Ramos

Working parents always need "apostolic" missionaries the grandparents. When we care for our grandchildren we do not expect any material reward. Love, bonding, joy and feeling young abound when they are around. Oh the joy to see the first smile, the first step, the first step the first day at school! During holidays and special life events, when parents and grandchildren express gratitude and love joy reigns in the house. But the blessings do not stop here. When a grandchild refers to a grandparent as a life model in their school

Continued: Where are they now: Lloyd Vince Arceo



passed the CPA examination of the Philippines. He has since been working as a CPA in Makati and has assumed financial responsibility in educating his younger brother and handling the majority of the family expenses. In October Lloyd will be taking the Certified Management Accountant test, a more prestigious and internationally accepted certification.

composition or in a college application essay he can really warms our hearts. And when a grandchild follows the professional footsteps of the grandparents we feel the important impact we have made and we feel a certain amount of joy and pride that words are insufficient to describe. But we will always remember the fun we had when we joined them playing their games, reading books or just telling each other about events of the day. It melts our hearts seeing besides seeing them loves us as their grandparents they also as their best friend at the same time. Indeed our grandchildren are special blessings from God.

By: Aida and Doming Camba

I can summarize my feelings for our grandchildren, in one word: EXHILARATING! Somehow, grandchildren do not have to do anything to be lovable, especially before they are 13 years old. The truth is, they are lovable the younger they are. When they were

of younger age, my grandchildren were more tolerant of my hugs and kisses. I enjoyed my grandchildren more when I was younger because I was mentally and physically more capable. I think the bond between grandparents with grandchildren happens when they were born. They were born to please their grandparents. And we were even more pleased recently when we learned that my granddaughter, Jackie Ramos, will be awarded the Hornet's Award for being on the Superintendent's list for obtaining straight "A" in all her academic subject for three marking periods during the current academic year. It warms our hearts to have our GRANDCHILDREN. They are our constant source of joy and pride.

By: Jingkie Aseron

Whenever I see my grandchildren I feel a special closeness to them. Somehow I feel I will be better playing the role of

a grandfather than the role I played as a father to my children. I find myself more patient, more understanding and easily taken by the charms, hugs and kisses. I tell myself that I am here just to enjoy and to spoil them. Their discipline is not my primary role as their grandfather. That is the role of their parents now and not mine. I find myself repeating history. I thank my mother for raising me up with discipline and instilled in me the proper values in life. But when I think of my own grandmother I always remember how she said "yes" to every toy, every outfit, and everything else I asked for. She was always there through my college years. I often went to her to ask for replenishment of my allowance as I often spent what my mother gave me that should have lasted for a week.

By: Ruben Alvarez



Christmas Extravaganza / Nativity Scene with PCSNI children & grandchildren in the cast.

HALLOWEEN at the PCC 2018

by Tina Aquino and Beth Dizon

Halloween is an annual holiday celebrated each year on October 31. It originated from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. The evening before was known as "All Hallows Eve", and later, "Halloween". Over time, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like trick-or-treating, carving jack-o'-lanterns, festive gatherings, wearing costumes and eating sweet treats. PCSNJ celebrated Halloween last October 27, 2018 at the community center. The Halloween committee decided to have a Disney theme. Working cooperatively, the committee kept the cost down by using their imagination, resourcefulness and creative talents. They were able to create the perfect ambiance for Halloween through recycled decorations and decorations they made themselves. The guests felt the spirit of Halloween as soon as they arrived. Savory cuisine was served for dinner. Spooky candies, gummy worms and "dirt" pie were served for dessert. All of the guests came in their Disney character costumes. Families came in Star Wars attires. Some couples came in coordinated costumes as Mickey and Minnie Mouse, and Snow White and her Prince. There were guests dressed as the Little Mermaid, Pirate, Mulan, Ninja Turtles, Goofy, Dorothy, Cars, Minnie Mouse, Mickey Mouse and many others. Halloween is a holiday enjoyed by children, teen agers and adults. All who came, regardless of their ages had a wonderful time. There were appropriate games and prizes for all. It was a wonderfully scary Halloween party.

The Halloween committee thanks the food donors, the volunteers who helped in setting up and cleaning up the center, the DJ who provided the music during the games and throughout the program, and all the guests who came to support this fundraising event. Proceeds were allocated to the PCSNJ building fund.



Halloween at PCSNJ 2019



Philippine Independence Fiesta at Cooper River Park



Araw Ng Kagitingan Celebration at Philippine Center



Philippine Independence Fiesta at Rizal Monument

THE PCSNJ 2019 SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE By Cynthia Aragoncillo, Chairman

As a non-profit organization the primary goal of PCSNJ's scholarship program is to demonstrate that academic excellence is valued the most in the Filipino community. PCSNJ promotes this by recognizing outstanding graduating high school students by giving the Filipiniana Scholarship Award which carries a \$250 monetary grant for each recipient.

PCSNJ authorizes schools to grant one awardee from their graduating classes. The scholarship committee instructs each school to follow strictly these three criteria: the awardee must be in the top 20% ranking of the graduating class, must be of Philippine descent and must be a resident of Southern New Jersey. Recognizing that there can be many students who may meet the these, the schools are free to add other criteria such as participation in extra-curricular activities, community service, work experiences and other factors they may be important in reaching their final choice.

The PCSNJ's 2019 Filipiniana Scholarship awardees are as follows:

Lauren Baron -Washington Township

Allyson Berona - Timber Creek Regional

Denise Juliane B. Dacanay - Eastern Regional

Allyson Dionglay - Kingsway Regional

Alyssa Espulgar - Williamstown High School

Regine Palconit - Triton Regional

Kristina Ramos - Haddonfield Memorial

Eion Tamayo - Deptford Township High School

PCSNJ in coordination with the Philippine Nursing Association of Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia (PNASNJP) will host a special luncheon for the awardees and their families at the Philippine community center on August 17, 2019. During this event, the scholarship committee will present the \$250 grant for each award recipient

We continue to promote camaraderie and networking amongst the awardees, the officers of PCSNJ and PNASJP and the community. Another exciting news about the PCSNJ's 2019 Scholarship Initiative is the creation of the Scholar's Corner where the organization will showcase the awardees through their photos and information about their accomplishments. PCSNJ invites all to visit the Scholar's Corner at the Community Center and to share in the Filipino American pride through the PCSNJ scholars.

2019 Philippine Independence Fiesta 2019 at Cooper River Park , Cherry Hill, New Jersey





PCSNJ Golf Tournament

October 26, 2019

Ramblewood Country Club

Mt. Laurel, New Jersey*

Join our 2019 Golf Tour Tournament
October 26, 2019

Registration starts at 7:30 AM
Shotgun start 8:00 AM

12:00-3:00 PM
Awards Ceremony
Filipino Heritage Celebration
Ramblewood Ballroom

Golf Registration \$120.00 per person
Lunch Only ticket \$30.00 adult / \$20.00 child
Hole Sponsor \$100.00

Contact:

Arelyne Pacho-Ramos : pachoramos1@aol.com
Senn Fontanilla : saftravel@gmail.com

